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AUTHOR Gardner, R. C.
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ABSTRACT

Social, aptitudinal, and attitudinal factors that influence acquisition of a second language can also have an effect on the subsequent retention of that language. "Retention" is the maintenance or improvement of proficiency in a language following its acquisition. A study by G. Edwards shows that long-term retention of linguistic and communicative competence in a second language for bilinguals is a function of: (1) successful prior or initial learning, (2) opportunity to use the information initially acquired, and (3) interest in using this information. Past research has concentrated on social factors of language acquisition rather than language retention. However, since retention depends on language competence, those factors that affect competence will also affect retention. These social factors include: (1) positive orientation toward the language group; (2) attitudes toward the learning situation; and (3) learner motivation. Of these three, motivation is the main factor linking attitudes to achievement. Additional factors are the individual's willingness to participate in activities to promote retention of the language, the perception of the prestige of the native language, and the individual's self-image when using the native language. (PJM)

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SOCIAL FACTORS IN LANGUAGE RETENTION

R. C. Gardner

University of Western Ontario

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DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO LONDON, CANADA

SOCIAL FACTORS IN LANGUAGE RETENTION[1]

R. C. Gardner
University of Western Ontario

Like other papers in this collection, this article addresses the problem of second language attrition, however, as the title suggests, attention is directed to the retention of language skills rather than their loss. The reason for focussing on retention is that the types of social factors to be considered, attitudes, motivation, and ethnicity, would be expected to play positive roles in influencing the extent to which language skills are retained. It seems meaningful, therefore, to direct attention to retention rather than loss. It should be emphasized, furthermore, that most of this paper is concerned with the possible role, rather than the actual one, that social factors might play in second language retention, largely because little research has been conducted on this problem. Social factors have been investigated rather extensively with respect to their role in second language acquisition, and this research will be discussed with a view to generating hypotheses with respect to their role in second language retention.

Definitions of Language Retention and Attrition

Language retention refers to the maintenance or improvement of proficiency in a language following its initial acquisition; attrition refers to a decrease in the level of proficiency. Thus, retention and attrition can be viewed as two ends of a bipolar dimension. It seems obvious, however, that these definitions omit an important aspect when considering retention or attrition from a social psychological point of view. In this context it

seems necessary to add the requirement that this retention or attrition takes place in a context where continued use of the language is not required by the social demands operating on the individual. Where the individual is in a situation in which he/she uses the language in a rather continuous fashion from day to day, the concept of language retention is synonymous with language use. And if facility with the language were to decline it would be more meaningful in most contexts to look for some neurological cause rather than a social one.

The major aspects of this definition are illustrated in Figure 1, which shows a time line extending from Time 1 (the beginning of language acquisition)

Insert Figure 1 about here

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through Time 2 (the termination of the acquisition period) to Time 3. This time line can be considered as consisting of two components, the Language Acquisition Period which is represented by the period of time from Time 1 to Time 2, and the Incubation Period which is that time after Time 2. It is assumed that some form of language training or experience takes place during the Language Acquisition Period, and that the Incubation Period is characterized by an absence of specific language training and immediately available opportunities or pressures to use the language. Using this model language retention or attrition would be defined by assessing language proficiency at Time 3 and comparing it with that attained at Time 2. If language proficiency is constant or improves from Time 2 to Time 3, we would speak of Language Retention. If language proficiency deteriorates over the interim, we would speak of Language Attrition.

The model described is largely schematic but it can be applied to specific cases. Consider the following two fictitious examples. The first is

a young woman who studied Spanish in school from age 11 to 18, and then went to University where she did not study Spanish, though she may have had some opportunities to use her skills. In this case, Time 1 and Time 2 would represent the ages 11 and 18, respectively, even though it is obvious that she probably did not study Spanish all the time during that interval. Furthermore, the Incubation Period is assumed to have begun at age 18 because formal training terminated then even though there may have been some opportunities to acquire or maintain specific skills after that time.

The second example involves a young man who was raised in a Spanish-speaking home, but who went to an English language school. At age 20, he moved away from home to a largely English speaking environment. With respect to Spanish, the Language Acquisition Period would be defined as birth to age 20; the Incubation Period is that time following age 20.

There is no intention here to equate these two examples in any way. They are used mainly to show how the schematic representation of language retention could be applied to two very different contexts. Providing assessment procedures were available, however, in both situations the extent of language retention could be measured by comparing performance at Time 3 with that at Time 2. The examples are useful, however, in indicating that providing that there is an interval which can be identified as an Incubation Period, we can assess Language Retention or Attrition. In the first example involving the young woman we can assess second language retention. In the second example involving the young man the focus was on first language retention. If he were to move into a situation at some later time where his English language skills were put into relative disuse, we could, of course, assess second language retention in his case also.

The Potential Role of Social Factors

When considering the possible role of social factors in second language retention it also seems necessary to distinguish between the two different types of cases. The first type is the individual who acquires some level of competency in the second language in the school environment. These individuals vary in the amount (number of years) and type of training (e.g., regular second language programs, early immersion, late immersion -- see Tucker, 1974), and consequently the degree of proficiency in the second language (see, for example, Swain, 1974). When assessing second language retention, these factors must be considered since they might conceivably influence the amount of retention. The second type is the individual from a bilingual environment who develops bilingual skills in that environment sometimes with, and sometimes without, formal school training in both languages. Such individuals would also vary in their degree of proficiency in both languages but in addition they might tend to differ in terms of the personal meaning to themselves of proficiency in one or both languages. The reason for distinguishing between these two types is that they could point to different types of factors which might mediate the extent and nature of second language retention.

This distinction is evident in a study conducted by Edwards (1977). A major part of the study involved the investigation of language proficiency among a sample of 209 native English-speaking (Anglophone) and 246 native French speaking (Francophone) members of the Canadian Public Service who were classified as being in bilingual positions. Approximately one third of each sample were tested six months after their initial assessment of language proficiency, one-third after 12 months, and one-third 18 months after their original testing. The measures of second language proficiency were standardized

tests assessing each of the four language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking. For the Anglophone sample the results, showed " ... little change in test performance in the passive skills (reading, and listening) as well as in the active skills (writing and speaking) for the six month group of subjects; as time increases to the 12 and 16 month points, a decline in test performance is manifested." (Edwards, 1977, p. 63). No declines were obtained for the Francophone samples, however.

A questionnaire was administered to both samples in order to assess their reactions to such matters as their use of the other language in the work setting, their proficiency in the language, and their perceptions about using it. As might be anticipated based on the above results, Francophones tended to use the language in the work setting more frequently than Anglophones, and to rate themselves as more competent. That is, second language retention was best for those individuals (i.e., Francophones) who had the opportunity and ability to use their second language. This generalization was even supported in an analysis of the Anglophone sample. Edwards made use of a discriminant function analysis to compare those Anglophones who declined appreciably in writing and speaking skills with those who improved. The variables which contributed most to discrimination involved language use and language confidence, indicating that opportunity to use the language and confidence in using it were most important for language retention. Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, initial level of competence was not an important variable.

Edwards (1977) also presents the results of a follow up interview of 67 Anglophones and 28 Francophones, during which time assessments were made of each individual's level of competence in the second language. These results confirmed those already noted. Anglophones demonstrated that their level of French was generally so poor that they could use it only in basic routine

tasks associated with their occupations. Francophones, however, were generally able to use English in any type of situation.

On the basis of these studies, Edwards (1977, p. 102) concludes that the results support the hypothesis that "Long term retention of linguistic and communicative competence in a second language in the case of bilinguals working in the Public Service of Canada is a function of:

(1) successful prior or initial learning;

(2) opportunity to use the information initially acquired; and,

(3) interest in using the linguistic resources initially acquired."

These studies did not investigate to any great extent the role that social factors play in second language retention possibly because a pilot study conducted by Edwards (1976) suggested to him that attitudes and motivation were less important factors than environmental ones. These studies do, however, suggest ways in which such factors could relate to second language retention. Since retention depended in part upon the level of competence attained when language training was completed, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that those factors which influence initial acquisition would influence retention. Considerable research (see below) has demonstrated relations between a number of attitudinal/motivational variables and second language proficiency thus it seems reasonable to predict that these same variables would be related to retention. Furthermore, retention was also dependent upon the opportunity to use the language and the interest in using it. Considerable research (see below) has indicated, however, that attitudinal/motivational variables tend to influence the extent to which individuals will seek out opportunities to use a second language in a number of different contexts and hence their interest in using the language. In situations where there is little opportunity to use a language, it is probable that language loss will occur unless individuals seek

out opportunities to reinforce it. Whether or not they will do this, however, can be linked to social factors. Edward's (1977) study, therefore, offers some support for the notion that second language retention will be mediated by social factors, and even gives some hint as to the type of role they might play.

The study by Edwards also serves to suggest another class of social factors which might be considered. Although Edwards seems to see many of the differences between Anglophones and Francophones in terms of initial level of second language competence (and age of acquisition), there is potentially another important social factor, viz., the role of language in ethnic identity (see Fishman, 1977). Lambert (1974) has made an important distinction between additive and subtractive bilingualism. Additive bilingualism refers to that situation where the acquisition of a second language is an enriching experience, where the individual adds a second language to his repertoire without any loss to his first language or his feelings of identification with his own cultural community. It seems reasonable that to some extent this would be determined by the individual, however, it is meaningful to propose that such experiences are probably most common among members of a majority group learning a second language. Subtractive bilingualism on the other hand, occurs when the acquisition of the second language is seen as having a deleterious effect on the individual's first language or sense of identity with his own ethnic community. Again whether or not this occurs would seem to be largely dependent upon how the individual perceives the situation, though it would probably be more common among members of a minority group learning the language of the majority group.

Many instances of what might be termed community or social subtractive bilingualism can be documented where over a few generations one language in a

community tends to virtually die out (see, for example, Hudson-Edwards & Bills, in press). In these contexts it might be expected that subtractive bilingualism would be the norm, even if one accepted the individual-based definition proposed here. In the Canadian context, Lambert (1974) suggested that subtractive bilingualism would probably characterize many French Canadians learning English, whereas additive bilingualism would be more characteristic of English Canadians learning French. We have no way of knowing, but it is possible that the fact that Edwards found little English language loss among the francophones was that in point of fact it was their French language that was being weakened -- at least in the job setting. Be that as it may we shall see later that for minority group members learning a second language there could be many pressures operating on them which do not operate on majority group members learning another language, and that these too should be considered in studies of language retention, where here the focus might well be on first language retention.

Social Factors in Second Language Retention

When considering the role of social factors in second language retention, it is necessary to consider the nature of the role they would play. On the one hand, social factors could be linked with retention to the extent that they influence different levels of second language proficiency since retention has already been shown to be associated with proficiency (see Edwards, 1977). By considering those social factors which relate to second language achievement, therefore, we will be able to hypothesize the nature of social factors which would relate to second language retention. It is also possible, however, that social factors could be linked with retention to the extent that they are related to a willingness to make use of the language whenever opportunities

arise. By considering those classes of variables which reflect a willingness to make use of the language in various situations, and identifying those social factors most related to them, we will be able to hypothesize about another potential role played by social factors.

Attitudinal/motivational Variables and Second Language Achievement. One of the initial studies of the relation of attitudinal/motivational variables to second language achievement was conducted by Gardner and Lambert (1959). They factor-analyzed a number of measures administered to a sample of English speaking highschool students studying French in Montreal. Two factors were obtained which shared variance in common with measures of French achievement. One was identified as a language aptitude dimension because it received substantial loadings from the subscales of the Modern Language Aptitude Test (Carroll & Sapon, 1959) and other measures of verbal ability. The other was defined as a social-motivation factor because it obtained high loadings from a measure of Attitudes toward French Canadians, Motivational Intensity to Learn French and an Integrative as opposed to an Instrumental Orientation in language study. The configuration of this factor suggested that those individuals who had a favorable attitude toward French Canadians, who wanted to learn French in order to become closer psychologically to the French Canadian community, and who worked hard to learn French would be successful. Since achievement in French contributed to both this dimension and the language aptitude one, it suggested that achievement in a second language was related to both ability and motivational characteristics.

Since that study many others have been conducted with comparable results in many regions and involving many languages -- teenage students studying French in Montreal, Maine, Louisiana and Connecticut (Gardner & Lambert, 1972),

London, Canada (Gardner & Smythe, 1975; Smythe, Stennett & Feenstra, 1972), and California (Cavanaugh, 1977), teenage students studying English as a second language in Quebec (Clément, Gardner & Smythe, 1977b; in press) and in Ontario (Clément, Major, Gardner & Smythe, 1977), Filipino highschool students studying English as a second language in Manila, Republic of the Philippines (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), and Franco-American students studying French as a second language in Maine and Louisiana (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Obviously, all of these studies did not produce results identical to those obtained by Gardner and Lambert (1959). They all did, however, demonstrate relations between second language proficiency and attitudinal/motivational attributes on the one hand and language aptitude variables on the other.

Such results have been interpreted as suggesting that proficiency in a second language is mediated by two classes of individual difference variables, language aptitude, and attitudinal/motivational characteristics. Recent research (Gardner, Clément, Smythe & Smythe, 1979) has grouped the attitudinal/motivational indices into three categories on the basis of the major concept identified, Integrativeness, Attitudes toward the Learning Situation and Motivation.

Integrativeness refers to an accepting and positive orientation toward the other language group in particular and other groups in general. This category involves three measures, Strength of an Integrative Orientation, Attitudes toward the Ethnic Group, and Interest in Foreign Languages. In 32 studies of highschool students learning French as a second language, internal consistency estimates of reliability (Cronbach Coefficient α) for these three tests have yielded median values of .82, .87, and .86, respectively.

Attitudes toward the Learning Situation are affective reactions involving the formal language learning context. Two measures comprise this category,

Evaluation of the Course and Evaluation of the Teacher. Median reliability coefficients for these tests are .95 and .91.

Motivation refers to the individual's total drive to learn a second language and is seen to comprise three facets. The first involves the amount of effort the individual expends in learning the language; the second refers to how much the individual wants to learn the language; and the third is the individual's attitude toward learning the language. Each of these are components of motivation but none of them index motivation by themselves. Only when all three are combined do we have a complete representation of motivation. Three measures comprise this category, Motivational Intensity, Desire to Learn the Language, and Attitudes toward Learning the Language. Median reliability coefficients for the three tests are .82, .86 and .94.

This classification of variables represents a logical rather than empirical grouping of the measures. In the factor analytic investigations of these types of variables along with language aptitude and second language proficiency, it has generally been found that they all tend to load on one social-motivational factor which is independent of another dimension typically identified as language aptitude. Indices of second language proficiency, furthermore, tend to contribute to both dimensions. The independences of the social-motivational and language aptitude dimensions has also been demonstrated directly. Gardner, Clément, Smythe & Smythe (1979) found, in 28 samples, that the correlations between composite attitude/motivation scores and language aptitude scores were low (median = .12), and generally not significant.

Research in this area has lead to the generalization that the successful acquisition of a second language is dependent upon both an ability for languages (language aptitude) and an appropriate motivation. Within this

general framework, Lambert (1963; 1967) has proposed that the individual's motivation is determined by his/her attitudes toward the other language community and his/her orientation (either integrative or instrumental) toward language study. Gardner (1979) and Gardner, Gliksman and Smythe (1978) agree with this formulation but suggest that motivation to learn a second language is fostered not only by group-related attitudinal dispositions but also attitudes toward the learning situation. Gardner, Clément, Smythe and Smythe (1979) have shown, furthermore, that correlations between measures of second language achievement and the composite scores described previously were highest for Motivation (median correlation for 28 samples of average size of 180 students = .38), and lower but generally comparable for both Integrativenness and Attitudes toward the Learning Situation (median correlations of .25 and .28, respectively). The median correlation between language aptitude and second language achievement for the same studies was .42.

Gardner (1979) has demonstrated that the major factor underlying these correlations is the level of motivation. This was done by contrasting partial correlations of various attitude measures with second language achievemennt removing the effects of motivation with those for motivation removing the effects of the corresponding attitude measure. The partial correlations for Motivation were consistently higher than those for the attitude measures, moreover many of the partial correlations of the attitude measures weren't even significant. The implication of this finding is that level of motivation is the major process variable linking attitudes to achievement. Attitudes, on the other hand, have the major function of serving as the basis for motivation. That is, attitudes appear to be important because they provide a long term foundation for motivation which is otherwise influenced by a number of situational factors such as examinations, extra-curricular activities and the

like.

The research reviewed in this section and the formulation just presented suggests one hypothesis concerning the role that social factors and, it might be added, language aptitude, could play in language retention. Hypothesis I states that, since attitudinal/motivational characteristics are related to the level of second language proficiency, they will relate to second language retention (as would language aptitude). The model proposed argues that attitudinal variables involving integrativeness and the learning situation influence and maintain levels of motivation which, in turn, effect differences in second language proficiency, and such an analysis seems relevant to second language retention. Where individuals are high on integrativeness and/or attitudes toward the learning situation it is reasonable to predict that once language training has terminated they will still be oriented toward maintaining competence in the language, and thus even in the absence of opportunities to use the language, the rate of language loss should be less severe than for individuals lacking the attitudinal support.

Attitudinal/Motivational Variables and Participation in Language-Related Situations. Attitudinal/motivational variables could also influence second language retention by orienting the individual to take every opportunity to maintain proficiency in the language. This hypothesis is supported by studies of second language acquisition which demonstrate that attitudinal/motivational variables are related to whether or not individuals will enter into situations where they might develop skill in the language. These studies involve such different situations as perseverance in second language study, inter-ethnic contact, and even participation in the language classroom. They all agree in demonstrating that attitudinal/motivational variables influence the extent to which individuals take advantage of opportunities

to develop language proficiency.

One of the first investigators of the relation between attitudes and perseverance in second language study was Bartley (1969; 1970). In the first study, Bartley (1969) demonstrated that elementary school students who dropped out of a second language program had less favourable attitudes toward language learning and lower language aptitude than students who continued on. In the second study, Bartley (1970) tested elementary school students on two occasions, the beginning and end of the school year, and assessed their attitudes toward second language acquisition. At the second testing, students also indicated whether or not they would continue language study the next year. On both assessments, those indicating that they were continuing language study, demonstrated much more positive attitudes than those electing to drop out. In addition, those dropping out decreased in attitudes from the first to the second testing, while those continuing on maintained stable attitudes.

Subsequent research conducted by Gardner and Smythe (1975) elaborated the type of attitude and motivation variables differentiating "stay-ins" from "drop-outs". Subjects for this study were enrolled in French as a second language in Grades 9, 10 and 11 at the time they were assessed on attitudinal/motivational ability variables; they were classified as "stay-ins" or "drop-outs" the following year on the basis of whether or not they were actually registered in French. Comparisons of these two groups demonstrated that the "stay-ins" had significantly more favourable attitudes toward French Canadians, were more interested in foreign languages, and expressed more of an integrative orientation in language study (in short were higher on all three indices of Integrativeness). They also demonstrated more motivational intensity, desire to learn French, and favourable attitudes toward learning

French (the three aspects of Motivation). They also had a more favourable evaluation of the French class (one component of Attitudes toward the Learning Situation). In addition, they were more instrumentally oriented, reported more parental encouragement to learn French and were less anxious in the French class. The "stay-ins" and "drop-outs", however, did not differ significantly on such attributes as attitudes toward the English class or European French people, school anxiety, need achievement, machiavellianism, anomie, authoritarianism or ethnocentrism. Predictably the two groups also differed on measures of French achievement and language aptitude (obtained the same year the attitudes were assessed), even though these differences were not as pronounced as those for many of the attitude measures. This later finding tends to agree with that of Mueller and Harris (1966) who found no differences in language aptitude between "stay-ins" and "drop-outs" in a University French program.

The importance of attitudes and motivation in influencing perseverance in language study is further indicated by Gardner, Smythe, Clément, and Gliksman (1976), who summarize correlations between measures of attitudes, motivation, language aptitude and French grades and the stated intention to continue or drop out of langauge study for approximely 1000 students in each of grades 7 to 11 in six Canadian provinces. In general, attitudinal and motivational measures tended to correlate higher with the intention to continue than either French grades or language aptitude, particularly at the lower grades. At all grade levels, motivation was the highest correlate of the behavioral intention to continue studying French.

Another indication of the role that attitudinal/motivational variables play in influencing individuals to take advantage of opportunities to use the second language is given by Clément, Gardner and Smythe (1977a). The purpose

of this investigation was to assess the effects of a 4-day excursion to Quebec city on attitudes and motivational characteristics of grade 8 students. Students were tested before and after the excursion, and were categorized in either high or low frequency of contact groups by means of a median split on responses to a question on the post-excursion questionnaire asking them to rate the extent to which they interacted in French with French Canadians during the excursion. A control group who did not take part in the excursion was also tested on both occasions. One analysis compared the low contact, high contact, and control groups on their attitudinal and motivational characteristics as assessed on the initial questionnaire. This is the analysis of interest here. The results demonstrated that those who took part in the excursion (both the low and high contact groups) had more favourable attitudes toward learning French and a greater desire to learn French than those in the Control group. Furthermore, the high contact group, in contrast with the other two groups, had more positive attitudes toward French Canadians and toward learning French, showed greater interest in foreign languages, were more motivated to learn French, were more integrative in their orientation to language study, and felt that they received more support from their parents to learn French. In short, both the willingness to enter into a situation where one might hear the other language, and the willingness to try using it are related to attitudinal characteristics.

This generalization is warranted also on the basis of Taylor and Simard's (1975) study of language use in a bicultural setting. They found, as one might expect, that the inability to speak the other language is an obvious barrier to inter-ethnic contact, but that an even greater handicap to interaction between members of the French and English community were attitudinal/motivational variables.

The last line of research which suggests that attitudinal/motivational variables could influence the extent to which individuals make use of opportunities to promote second language skill is in those studies which investigate students' participation in the language class itself. Two studies have been conducted to date, and both show that attitudes and motivation are implicated in classroom behaviour. In the first of these, Gliksman (1976) investigated the relation between aspects of classroom behaviour and a composite attitudinal/motivational score, based on the indices of Motivation and Integrativeness described earlier, which he termed an Integrative Motive. The attitudinal/motivational measures were obtained on two classes of students in each of Grades 9, 10 and 11, on the first day of a semesterered French language program. The behaviour of all students were recorded by two observers during eight class periods over the entire semester. Gliksman (1976) found that those who were high on the Integrative Motive (based on a median split on the composite score) volunteered more frequently in the French class, gave more correct answers in the class and were rated by the observers as demonstrating more interest and enthusiasm in class.

In a similar study, Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern and Todesco (1978) demonstrated that volunteering in the French class, as indicated by hand-raising, was related almost equally to measures similar to the three attitudinal/motivational indices discussed earlier. For a sample of 24 students, they obtained correlations of .47 with Motivation, .39 with Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation and .37 with Integrativeness. These variables were not related to many other ratings of classroom behaviour, but the fact that they were related to volunteering indicates that attitudinal/motivational variables are involved in attempts to capitalize on opportunities to use the second language.

The results of all this research on perseverance, inter-ethnic contact

and classroom participation would appear to have important implications with respect to second language retention. Once individuals complete second language training, it is reasonable to expect that with time some skills in the language will deteriorate if the individuals do not make use of them. This leads to Hypothesis II which states that since attitudinal/motivational characteristics are related to indices of participation in language related situations, they will relate to attempts to maintain second language skills once training has terminated. This might involve seeking out further training, colleagues who speak the language, or simply self-practise, etc..., but would eventuate in greater language retention. This association between attitudinal/motivational characteristics and language retention is, it should be noted, direct. It represents a strategy which might be used by some individuals to reduce language loss, and one that is mediated by attitudinal characteristics.

Social Factors in First Language Retention

The preceding section was concerned with social factors in second language retention and was appropriate for any individuals involved in the acquisition of a second language. The present section, however, focuses on the possible role that social factors might play in first language retention. Most of the relevant research literature involves members of an ethnic minority group, and thus this section is couched in these terms. It seems likely, however, that the resulting hypothesis would be relevant to any situation where first language retention is the central focus providing that the dynamics described are applicable. First language retention, in contrast with attrition, in this context refers to the maintenance of one's native language following the acquisition of a second language and the inclusion in an

environment where the opportunity (or social acceptance) for using the first language is severely reduced. The social factors in this case are seen to arise from the link between language and ethnic identity.

Language and Ethnic Identity. More and more researchers are beginning to stress the link between language and ethnic identity (see, for example, Giles, 1977), and it is even recognized that to some extent learning a second language can be a threat to cultural identity. Referring to the case of Mexican Americans, Ryan and Carranza (1977, p. 61) state, for example, that:

> "Language policy in the United States is indicative of the assimilationistic forces that exist in the society ... These forces result in a very high value attached to being American and 'speaking American'. Such national ethnocentrism has helped to establish linguistic pressure to speak English at the expense of other language varieties ... The Mexican American becomes involved in the dilemma of giving up his language (an integral part of his personality and identity) and becoming assimilated into the majority society or else retaining it and dealing with the consequences of resisting assimilation."

It is evident, however, that these pressures are not limited to the United States but in fact are relatively universal. In his analysis of the connection between language and ethnicity, Fishman (1977) discusses why language is so closely associated with ethnicity. He states (1977, p. 25-26) that language "easily becomes 'more than' a means of communication, even more than symbollic of the ethnic message; indeed, it becomes a prime ethnic value in and of itself." And more and more ethnic groups are stressing the importance of maintaining their own language. Examples of such groups are the Mexican Americans (Ryan & Carranza, 1977), French Canadians (d'Anglejan, 1979) and the Welsh (Bourhis & Giles, 1977).

Early research conducted in Canada suggested that individuals who speak

a different language tended to be down-graded in comparison with individuals who speak English. This was demonstrated rather dramatically on a number of occasions using a technique known as the "matched-guise" procedure (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960). It its simplest form this technique requires having subjects listen to a number of tape recorded "speakers". In point of fact, however, the speakers are bilinguals speaking once in one language (e.g., English) and once in the other (e.g., French). Subjects rate each speaker on a series of attributes as he/she is speaking, and the analysis involves comparisons of the ratings of the same stimulus person when speaking the different languages. Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner and Fillenbaum (1960) found that samples of English Canadians and French Canadians both evaluated English male guises more positively than French male guises. Comparable results were obtained by Preston (1963) in that both English Canadian and French Canadian subjects rated French Canadian male guises generally less positively on many personality traits than English Canadian male guises. This tendency, furthermore, seems to be acquired with age. Anisfeld and Lambert (1964) found that French Canadian monolingual 10 year old children tended to prefer French speaking guises, in contrast to the results obtained with adults, whereas bilingual students showed no preference. Lambert, Frankel and Tucker (1966) found, however, that this pattern for young children changed at about 12 years of age, and that after that age the adult preference for English speaking guises was obtained. It will be noted that many of these studies were conducted some time ago when French was a minority language in the Quebec scene. With the advent of the language legislation in Quebec making French the Official Language of the province and the resulting increased importance attributed to French in all walks of life, these results may not be obtained any more.

There is in fact evidence to suggest that the cultural context could influence reactions to speakers of different languages. Politzer and Ramirez (1973a) for example used the matched guise procedure to study reactions of Mexican American and Anglo American elementary and secondary school students to Spanish and English. Whereas the younger Anglo students upgraded the English guises in comparison with the Spanish ones, no differences were found for the older Anglo students or the Mexican Americans. Politzer and Ramirez (1973b) conducted a second study using grade 3 students, some from a bilingual education program and some from a regular school program. Anglo students in the regular program tended to upgrade the English guises, while the Mexican American students (from the bilingual program) rated the Spanish guises more favorably. Flores and Hopper (1975) made use of a matched guise procedure to study reactions of Mexican Americans to four different types of language styles (standard Spanish, standard English, a local variety of Spanish spoken by Mexican Americans, and accented English). They found that those adults who identified themselves as "Chicanos" rated speakers of the local Spanish significantly more positively than speakers of Standard English, while the sample as a whole rated speakers of standard Spanish more favourably than those who spoke local Spanish. Carranza and Ryan (1975) showed that in point of fact preferences for one language over another can be situation specific. They studied samples of bilingual Anglo American and Mexican American high school students who listened to Spanish and English guises in both a "home" and a "school" context. Both groups showed a definite preference for English in the school context, and a slight preference for Spanish in the home context.

These studies demonstrate that reactions to speakers of different languages are indeed complex and that any simple generalization would be difficult. Whereas the early Canadian studies suggested that there is a

tendency for both "majority"[2] and "minority"[2] group members to downgrade speakers of the "minority" group language, such generalizations are not supported in the later American studies. It seems quite likely, however, that these later studies were conducted at a time and in a context where strong movements were underway to improve the prestige of, and identification with, the "minority" group language (see Ryan & Carranza, 1977). What is clear from all the studies is that in some settings speakers of specific languages do give rise to definite evaluative reactions in some listeners.

The results of this research would seem to have important implications for the issue of language retention, and bear directly on Lambert's (1974) concepts of subtractive and additive bilingualism. Where members of a "minority" group are acquiring a second language in a context where members of the "majority" group as well as their own group downgrade speakers of the "minority" group language, it seems highly likely that the acquisition of a second language (i.e., that of the majority group) will be viewed as an instance of subtractive bilingualism. When speaking in their native language, these individuals would probably view themselves and be perceived by others as somewhat inferior. Under such situations, it seems reasonable that proficiency in their native language could deteriorate. Where speakers of both languages are evaluated similarly, on the other hand, environmental factors are such that additive bilingualism is probable provided that the individual perceives the situation similarly. In this type of context we might not expect any accelerated language loss due to identity conflicts. This analysis would suggest, therefore, that social factors could play a role in first language retention depending upon cultural perceptions of the prestige of the native language, and the individual's self perceptions of his or her image when using the native language.

Research has, in fact, indicated that in some situations members of a "minority" group do approach the learning of a second language with some concern because of potential identity conflicts. Taylor, Meynard and Rheault (1977) found, for example that among French speaking university students, the belief that learning English posed a threat to identity was negatively related to self-perceptions of proficiency in English. The only better predictor (in a stepwise multiple regression) was personal contact with English speaking people, which was positively associated with proficiency. Taylor, Meynard and Rheault found, furthermore, that threat to cultural identity from learning English was greater among individuals who had relatively less opportunity for contact with English speaking people in that they came from regions which were largely French speaking.

This study also demonstrated that perceived threat to cultural identity was relatively independent of integrative reasons for learning a second language -- a finding which disagrees with results obtained by Clément, Gardner and Smythe (in press). In their study of grade 11 French speaking students learning English as a second language, they found that threat to ethnic identity contributed negatively to a factor identified as an integrative motive dimension; moreover this dimension was related to persistence in second language study. They found too that self-confidence with English develops through contact with members of the English speaking community and that such confidence linked with motivation contributed to second language proficiency. Despite the differences which can only be resolved with further research, both studies confirm the generalization that for "minority" group members the acquisition of a second language can be influenced by perceptions of the potential threat such acquisition has for their own sense of ethnic identity.

Research concerning reactions to different languages and that concerned

with members of minority groups learning a second language suggest two generalizations with respect to first language retention. First, in those cultural contexts where the "minority" group language is downgraded by members of both communities, it is highly likely that second language acquisition would lead to subtractive bilingualism, and that other things being equal, attrition in the first language is more probable than in any other context. Realization of this possibility highlights the importance of considering the community's perceptions (the environmental context) in investigations of first language retention or attrition. In settings where such downgrading does not take place, particularly among members of the "minority" group, additive bilingualism would be the expected consequence of second language acquisition and there would be no culturally derived pressures to hasten first language attrition. One means of assessing the environmental context would be the matched-guise procedure where the tendency of groups to downgrade speakers of different languages could be assessed.

Regardless of whether an environmental context might be classified as promoting subtractive or additive bilingualism, it is likely that the individual's own perception of the consequences of bilingualism would themselves play an important role. If the individual tended to downgrade speakers of the first language, it seems reasonable that he/she might view bilingualism as a means of distancing himself/herself from the ethnic community, and such affective reactions may not only promote second language acquisition but also first language attrition. This would be an instance of individually-perceived subtractive bilingualism. Of course, the opposite could also be true in the case of additive bilingualism. This individually based interpretation of additive and subtractive bilingualism suggests that it is not sufficient to employ simply a community based view of additive and

subtractive bilingualism when considering first language attrition or retention. Although it is to be expected that individual's perceptions often correspond to those of the community this is not always the case. There could be cases where the individual perceives bilingualism in the additive sense even though the community as a whole might promote subtractive bilingualism.

This analysis leads to Hypothesis III. In a subtractive bilingualism context, retention of first language skills will be less than in an additive bilingualism context, and in any event, individual differences in retention will be related to the perceived consequences of bilingualism and the prestige attributed to the native language. This hypothesis stresses the importance of considering both the sociological makeup of the community as well as the social psychological attributes of the individual. By concentrating on one to the exclusion of the other, it is possible that we might miss significant factors in language attrition.

Summary

This paper has focused on social factors in language retention, particularly those of an attitudinal or motivational nature. Although there appears to have been very little research conducted on the role of social factors in language retention, a consideration of the research on second language acquisition and that on language and ethnic identity suggested three hypotheses which are directly testable. Two address the problem of retention of second language skills; the third is concerned with retention or attrition of first language skills, particularly, but not exclusively, among members of ethnolinguistic communities. Hopefully, this initial analysis will serve to promote research on this important and interesting problem area.

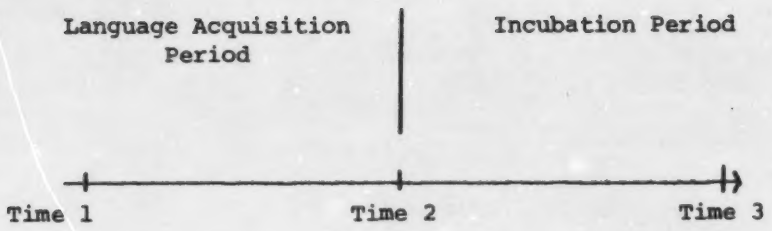

FIGURE 1. Schematic Representation of the Major Aspects of Language Retention

Footnotes

1. Preparation of the paper was facilitated by a grant from the Department of the Secretary of State under its programme to encourage language research in Canada.

2. The terms majority and minority groups are used here to refer to ethnic groups as viewed by the larger community. In this sense the "majority group" is seen as the one which tends to be most influential in a country as a whole. In some instances, of course, the "majority group" can actually be a very definite minority in a specific region. Because of such ambiguity, I have embedded the terms in quotation marks.

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